

# **Fifth Expert Working Group on the Preservation of the Bamiyan Site**

**Aachen, Germany  
14-16 December 2006**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Overall Issues**

The Participants of the Working Group

1. Acknowledge efforts made by the Afghan authorities as well as the progress made over the last year by the international experts in their cooperation for the technical assistance to the Afghan authorities, and also thank the donor institutions (Governments of Japan, Germany and France as well as the National Geographic Society) who have contributed to the implementation of the activities;
2. Remind that all activities implemented at the Bamiyan World Heritage site are to be officially approved by the Government of Afghanistan, in compliance with the World Heritage Convention;
3. Encourage the Afghan authorities to continue their inter-ministerial / inter-sectorial coordination as well as discussion and information-sharing among provincial and national authorities;
4. Underline that the various components within the project are all inter-related, and the need to ensure coordinative action among international experts and relevant Afghan authorities at all levels;

5. Request UNESCO to continue further efforts to ensure the safety of expert missions, and Afghan authorities to take further measures to clear the site of Unexploded Ordnances. Further cooperation should be sought in this regard for sites such as Shahr-i-Zohak and Shahr-i-Gholghola which fall within the core zone of the World Heritage property;
6. Acknowledge the successful implementation, in coordination with UNAMA, of a no-fly zone in front of the Giant Buddha niches, and recommend further no-fly zones for low-flying helicopters over the area of Shahr-i-Gholghola;
7. Underline the importance of the involvement of local people in any on-site activities in order to enhance employment and capacity development in the region;
8. Recommend that documentation on all scientific activities undertaken on-site be made available to the Afghan authorities for utilization in future monitoring activities;
9. Recommend further that available documentation be centralized at the Ministry of Information and Culture, shared also at the Bamiyan Training Centre to cultural heritage professionals engaged at the site. The Afghan authorities are recommended to develop and keep control of the data into a widely accessible, updatable, usable, yet security-ensured (certain archaeological data need to be strictly limited to concerned professionals in order to avoid looting of objects) and centralized database with carrying capacity, with the cooperation of international experts if necessary;
10. Thank all the donors who have contributed to the conservation activities for the Bamiyan site, and ask UNESCO to make further efforts to raise and coordinate funds from existing and potential donors, in order to continue the international technical cooperation for the prioritized activities as identified by the Working Group.
11. Note that, in order to allow the completion of the important safeguarding activities at this World Heritage property in Danger and to ensure their sustainability, further funds are required. The Working Group invites in particular the Governments of Japan and Germany to continue their support for the safeguarding of the Bamiyan site and to consider to provide further funding.

## **Conservation of Mural Paintings**

The participants of the Working Group

1. Acknowledge the completion of the inventory and database initiated by NRICP of the documented mural paintings fragments of the Bamiyan Valley, and endorse training of Afghan professionals in the use of this database;
2. Encourage continued studies in 2007 on the appropriate cleaning and consolidation methods and techniques for the mural paintings. Continued investigation on the original organic and inorganic materials used in the paintings is also encouraged in order to better understand Central Asian mural painting techniques;
3. Underline the importance of *in-situ* conservation of the mural paintings remaining in the caves;
4. Endorse the continuation in 2007 on the pilot projects at Cave N(a) and Cave I, and their use for the training of Afghan professionals on the conservation works;
5. Recommend monitoring of the crack in front of Cave N (a) together with engineers, in order to ensure the stability of the cave;
6. Recommend the utilization of the mural paintings' fragments collected and stored at the Bamiyan Training Centre for training activities on the treatment methods, before application of further direct treatment on the remaining mural paintings inside the caves.
7. Note the importance of continued secure protection and preservation of the fragments of the paintings already collected and stored, and to consider their public exhibition in the future.
8. Acknowledge the possibility of controlling environmental conditions and reducing potential threats to long-term preservation of the paintings inside particular caves by sealing those caves;
9. Recommend continuation of the climatic monitoring of the caves;
10. Stress the importance of local awareness-raising with didactical programmes in order to increase the understanding and support of the public in regard to direct and indirect conservation activities.

## **Emergency consolidation of the Giant Buddha niches and cliffs**

The Participants of the Working Group

1. Acknowledge the accomplishment of emergency operations over the last four years in consolidating the two Giant Buddha niches and cliffs;
2. Recommend implementation of a permanent manual system for regular monitoring of the stability of the niches by local professionals;
3. Agree on the priority for the consolidation of the back walls of both niches, and note the preliminary proposal to be implemented upon scaffolding, then grouting and anchoring as necessary, but with a minimum of impact on the heritage values;
4. Note the persistence of large cracks, and that a damage assessment of the back walls of the niches should be conducted for future planning on the use of appropriate techniques for necessary intervention;
5. Note the importance of the use of material compatible with the original material of the statues on the back walls of the niches;
6. Endorse a proper testing by a joint team composed, at least, of an engineer/geologist and a conservator/restorer, in order to choose the appropriate material before implementation of further major interventions such as grouting of the back walls;
7. Note that, in case of the use of ground penetration radar for geophysical prospection, the metal nets on the back walls should be temporarily removed;
8. Note the importance of further investigation on the geological evolution of the cliff structures in the Bamiyan Valley, and recommend studies on seismic impact including survey on the Bamiyan earthquake on 9 June 1956 and installation of seismic ground motion recorders for monitoring of the effects;
9. Recognize the fragility of the buttress of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche, and encourage a geo-technical investigation involving the boring of the buttress foundation and the monitoring of the movement of the buttress and the cracks;
10. Recommend continued cleaning of the existing drainage network on top of the cliffs and the establishment of a map of the drainage network.

## Conservation of the Giant Buddha statues

The participants of the Working Group

1. Acknowledge the substantial progress made by ICOMOS experts in the salvaging and storage of the fragments of the two Giant Buddha statues, where all works in the Eastern Giant Buddha niche have completed, and recommend continuation in 2007 for the Western Giant Buddha niche;
2. Encourage the finalization of the scaffold tower in the Eastern Giant Buddha niche which started in 2006 to make the back walls accessible to restorers, engineers and geologists, and foresee a similar scaffold in the Western Giant Buddha niche after successful completion of the salvaging works;
3. Note the necessity to increase the carrying capacity of the wire mesh at the back wall of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche by additional steel wire ropes, in order to ensure safety of all individuals executing the works;
4. Acknowledge the efforts of the Afghan authorities for the enhanced site-security, and stress the necessity of establishing a sustainable site-security plan.
5. Acknowledge the salvaging of plaster pieces with wooden pegs and strings from the surface of the Buddha statues (more than 3000 pieces), and appreciate the proposal of the Afghanistan authorities to safely store them in 2007 at the Bamiyan Training Centre for further analysis;
6. Note the extraordinary findings including birch fragments of manuscripts in July 2006 in the ground next to the right foot of the Eastern Giant Buddha, and recommend conservation of these highly fragile pieces of different materials in cooperation with relevant specialists. Establishment of a specialised laboratory at the Bamiyan Training Centre is encouraged for necessary studies;
7. Underline the priority in 2007 to develop a strategy for the consolidation of the back walls of both niches in cooperation of restorers and engineers;
8. Note the importance of reconstructing the partition walls between the small niches at the base of the Eastern Giant Buddha niche, destroyed by the explosion in 2001, as a necessary first step in 2007 in order to support the cliff structure above;
9. Acknowledge the latest results of the geological mapping in identifying the original position of the rock material, and encourage the finalization of documentation of all preserved/salvaged fragments in both niches upon geological and paleomagnetic analysis and 3D recording. The creation of a 3D model, already progressed for the Eastern Giant Buddha statue, contributes to the virtual positioning of the fragments;
10. Consider continued investigations for the technical possibility of an anastylosis (refer to Article 15 of the *Venice Charter*) as a method of reassembling the fragments of the Buddha statues.

11. Suggest the Ministry of Information and Culture to establish an Advisory Board on its future decisions on the possibilities of an anastylosis of the Giant Buddha statues.

## **Archaeological Investigations**

### The Participants of the Working Group

1. Underline the relevant articles in the *Law for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties* (last amendment in 2004) regarding the control of archaeological excavations;
2. Acknowledge the significant results from the works of the archaeological missions in Bamiyan;
3. Note that in regard to archaeological investigation, the missions of NRICP and the French expedition will cooperate and share scientific information, in order to obtain a better understanding of the history of Bamiyan and its value;
4. Note that archaeological prospection (geophysical surveys) shall be continued to determine the extent of the archaeological area and sites and identify the hitherto unknown buried cultural heritage, especially within the current buffer zone of the World Heritage boundary. In addition, archaeological survey of areas which are not yet investigated should be executed to further confirm the presence and types of cultural heritage to be protected;
5. Note that the extension of archaeological surveys within the Bamiyan Province shall be carried out to identify archaeological areas to enable their protection from threats (illegal excavations; looting; uncontrolled urban development);
6. Note that the *in situ* preservation of archaeological remains should be a priority to improve on-site conservation techniques and to increase the knowledge of the local specialists. *In situ* preservation of archaeological finds should be used to enhance awareness of the cultural value of Bamiyan for local people as well as for cultural tourism;
7. Acknowledge the importance of ongoing training for Afghan specialists and strongly encourage its continuation at all stages of archaeological activities, including training in the latest archaeological technologies and equipment.

8. Stress the importance of the economic and social role of cultural heritage resources, and recommend the Government of Afghanistan to consider the possible acquisition of lands of archaeological value, notably those where archaeological excavations are being carried out, in order to ensure the protection, preservation and promotion of present and future archaeological finds, according to the Articles 8 and 17 of the *Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties*.

### **Implementation of the Cultural Master Plan and the Preparation of the Management Plan for the *Archaeological Remains and the Cultural Landscape of the Bamiyan Valley***

The Participants of the Working Group

1. Acknowledge the adoption of the Cultural Master Plan by the Ministry of Urban Planning;
2. Acknowledge the execution of the first Bamiyan Workshop of stakeholders in August 2006, and recommend further continuation of such activities for the implementation of the Cultural Master Plan;
3. Recommend the strengthening of public awareness through the media and participation of the local stakeholders in the implementation of the Cultural Master Plan;
4. Continue to endorse the relocation of Bamiyan airport in order to safeguard the Cultural Landscape of Bamiyan and to allow urban expansion in the development zone as suggested in the Cultural Master Plan;
5. Congratulate the Governor of Bamiyan for the establishment of BCLCC (Bamiyan Cultural Landscape Coordination Committee) as an advisory council for the protection of the Cultural Landscape of the Bamiyan Valley, and stress that the conservation of the Cultural Landscape requires inter-sectoral cooperation between Ministries and agencies responsible for culture, urban planning, returning of refugees and IDPs, agriculture, environment, police, energy and water, public works, transport, rural and community development.

6. Refer to the Decision 30COM.7A.23 of the 30th session of the World Heritage Committee (July 2006), that the final draft Management Plan prepared for the Bamiyan World Heritage property be examined and finalized by the Afghan authorities for implementation and submission to the World Heritage Committee;
7. Stress the urgent need to increase the number of capable on-site security guards as well as to strengthen a system of regular site-inspection by professionals of the Ministry of Information and Culture;
8. Recommend the Afghan authorities to review the emergency nomination dossier of 2003 and to submit the modification to the current World Heritage boundaries and their buffer zones, in order to include the extent of the cultural landscape identified in the adopted Cultural Master Plan;
9. Encourage the development of sustainable tourism through a Tourism Plan for the Bamiyan site to enforce existing provisions, on condition that adequate participation of the local stakeholders and of conservation-sensitive experts in its planning is ensured, as part of an integrated regional development strategy. This plan should be established by the end of 2007;
10. Recommend exploration of the values of the Band-e-Amir under possible criteria for World Heritage nomination, and also endorse consideration of Bamiyan and Band-e-Amir in an integrated manner for a regional tourism development planning.

### **Training of professionals and heritage awareness-raising**

#### The Participants of the Working Group

1. Agree that all ongoing and new international activities should ensure training components and involvement of Afghan professionals in all stages for the sharing of methodology and expertise;

2. Encourage the Afghan authorities to establish proactive participation in all assistance activities through which capacity development could be achieved taking advantage of documentation (including translation in the official languages of Afghanistan), management and technical expertise in the relevant field of competence;
3. Recommend strengthening of education in the field of cultural heritage within the higher education system in Afghanistan.
4. Note the necessity to increase the number of Afghan professionals consisting of archaeologists, conservators, museologists, architects, planners, engineers and geologists and tourism specialists (guides, hoteliers, etc), in order to ensure sustainable management of heritage and transmission of their values.
5. Consider active training of professional local guides in the transmission of the heritage values of the property;
6. Encourage continuation of technical training activities for Afghan professionals by relevant cultural heritage institutes abroad;
7. Encourage demonstration of conservation and documentation management methods on-site to a wider range of professionals engaged in work on the site;
8. Recommend further training activities on the inventory of historical monuments and the possible uses of the documentation for the Historical Monuments Department;
9. Encourage the Afghan authorities to review their institutional structures and management of human resources, to create a strategy for the increase of remuneration for professionals in the country in order that permanence of qualified human resources is ensured for sustainable safeguarding of cultural heritage;
10. Encourage the mobilization of local media in order to raise public awareness on the values of heritage in the Bamiyan Valley and Afghanistan in general;
11. Recommend heritage awareness-raising programmes addressing youth;

12. Welcome the Bamiyan Training Centre to continue its function for capacity development activities, awareness raising programmes, collection of the available documentation, workshops, accommodation and exchange station of international and national missions, and as a resource centre for information important to the overall management, development and preservation of the Bamiyan site.